

# Rhode Island Charter Public Schools: Renewal Process

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Office of Charter Schools

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

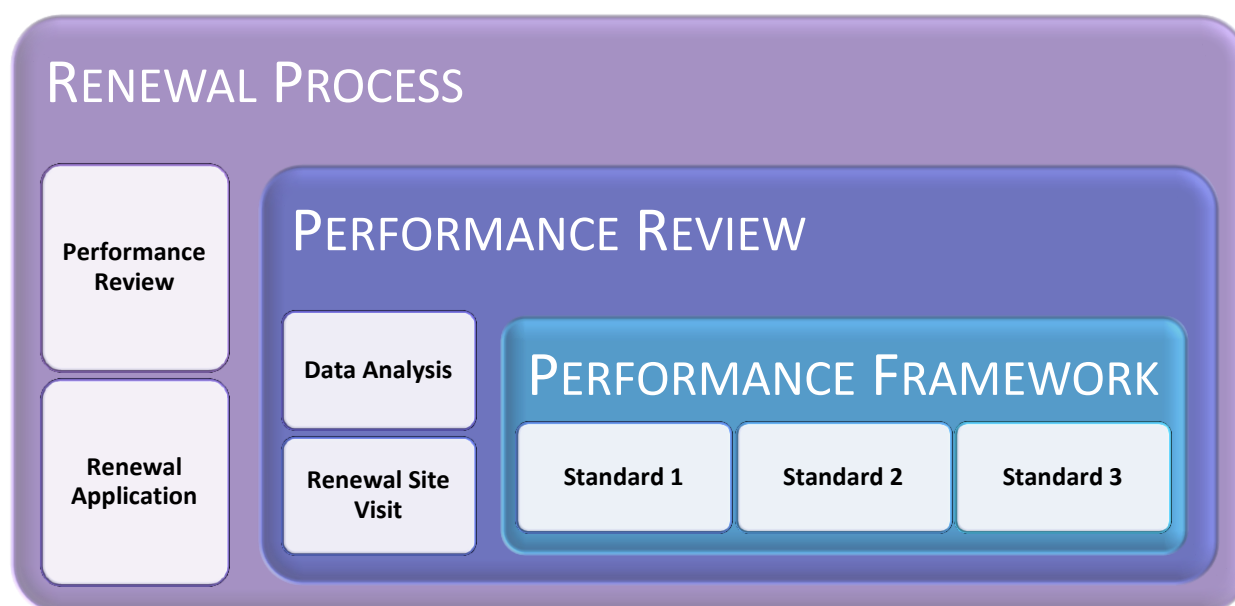
## TERMS

*Performance Review:* an evaluation of the school's student academic and organizational outcomes and inputs; conducted as part of the renewal process

*Performance Framework:* the 3 core questions and supporting sub-standards by which each school is evaluated during the performance review

*Renewal Process:* a multi-component process during a school's penultimate authorization year used to render a renewal recommendation to the Board of Education

*Renewal Site Visit:* a summative evaluation of whether the school is providing the appropriate conditions for success; a 3-day visit that is part of the renewal process



## OVERVIEW

The Board of Education makes decisions for charter renewal on the recommendation of the Commissioner. Two sources of information will inform the Commissioner's recommendation:

- 1) The Office of Charter School's Performance Review and
- 2) A completed Renewal Application from the school.

Information from these two sources will be presented to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will offer her recommendations for renewal to the Board of Education and discuss them at a work session.

## OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Performance Review is a rigorous evaluation of the school's performance based on the three following core questions:



### **1. Is the school's educational program an academic success?**

This section is designed to consider student outcome measures using the most generalizable data available. The calculations and analysis prepared for this response are considered when setting the renewal term.

### **2. Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?**

This section is designed to gauge the quality of the charter program implementation, including instructional leadership and practices, curricula development, student and staff supports, family and community engagement, school climate, and mission alignment at each school. Evidence regarding this question is gathered through the school's annual reports, a multi-day site visit process and evidence review.

### **3. Is the school a viable organization?**

This section is designed to gauge a charter school's ability to continue to operate both short- and long-term while at least maintaining the quality of their programs. The school's financial health, legal/regulatory compliance, and the quality of their implementation of programmatic goals is reviewed to assess organizational viability.

## RENEWAL APPLICATION

Schools complete a renewal application. The application gives schools a chance to articulate their strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

# Renewal Site Visit

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The primary purpose of the Rhode Island Department of Education renewal site visit is to provide information to inform the decision of whether or not to renew a school's charter. The information is gathered through a process that looks at trends across the school and triangulates multiple sources of evidence to reach summary judgments which take the form of ratings. The renewal visit is not an opportunity to provide technical assistance or advise members of the school community on strategies for improvement.



## BEFORE THE SITE VISIT: SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Designate who will be coordinating the visit for the school. Typically, the person responsible for coordinating the visit is the school leader, but the school may choose to designate another staff member to fulfill this function.
- 2) Submit the following electronic documents or resources:
  - **Class schedule** with teacher names and room numbers identified;
  - **Staff roster** with names, position, grade level; any days when a substitute will be responsible for students
  - **School map** with room number, teacher name, subject, and grade level;
  - **Family/Student Handbook**; School's discipline policy, if not contained in Handbook;
  - **Staff Handbook**;
  - Access to **documented curriculum**, ideally by grade level and subject area;
  - **Board meeting** agendas, minutes and packets for previous year; and
  - **Board policies** regarding finance, lottery and enrollment, school leader evaluation
  - **School planning** materials (eg. – school improvement plan, board strategic plan)

**Documents submitted in advance should be submitted in one electronic package by October 24<sup>th</sup>.**

- 3) Coordinate the schedule for the visit, specifically the timing of interviews with the board of directors, administrators, teachers, students, and parents.
  - Students in interview groups should be no younger than third grade.
  - Classrooms observations will take place throughout the visit, to be determined by the visit team.

#### DURING THE VISIT: SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Ensure that the site visit team of 3-4 people has a **space in which to work that can be locked and is not needed by staff members** for the duration of the visit.
- 2) In the site visit space, provide the following:
  - **Parent surveys** conducted during the most recent and current school year;
  - **Professional development plan** for the current school year and a sample teacher professional development plan; and
  - **Sample evaluations** for teacher and administrator
- 3) Coordinate with the team leader regarding any necessary changes to the visit schedule or additional meetings or interviews that might need to be held.

#### DURING THE VISIT: SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Renewal Site Visit Team Code of Conduct

The site visit team's conduct throughout the visit can significantly affect its ability to obtain and report information regarding the school's performance; it can also influence perceptions of the school community about the objectivity of the renewal process and report. The following Code of Conduct must be adhered to by all team members:

1. Ensure that you have reviewed all necessary materials, including this Protocol and, the documents and information provided in advance of the renewal site visit by the Office of Transformation and the school.
2. Understand your obligation to conduct the site visit without personal or professional bias and act accordingly.
3. Ensure that all of your communications with the school are professional and courteous in tone.
4. Avoid unnecessary disruptions to school and classroom routines while performing your assigned tasks such as classroom observations.
5. Honor scheduled appointments and inform the school contact immediately of any changes to the agreed-upon schedule.
6. Where appropriate, ensure the confidentiality of school information such as student names, health records, and personnel information.
7. Phrase interview questions without explicit or implied biases.
8. Do not offer personal or professional opinions or recommendations or divulge the content or nature of visit team discussions, even if solicited by interviewees.
9. Reject requests from those interviewed to speak "off the record"; all conversations and other evidence gathered during the site visit are considered "on the record."

10. Do not provide reassurance or warnings regarding charter renewal to school personnel; remind school personnel that the site visit report is only one of many sources of evidence used by the Office of Transformation in developing a charter renewal recommendation.
11. Do not evaluate the performance of individuals, either orally or in the site visit report.
12. Treat the draft report findings and related evidence as confidential until the report is finalized and accepted by the Office of Transformation. Refer queries from the school regarding the status of the site visit report to the Office of Transformation.
13. Do not communicate with outside groups or individuals, including the media, regarding the status of the report or opinions regarding renewal of the school's charter or individuals working at the school.
14. Limit your professional judgments to the content directly covered by the standards and further detailed through the site visit protocol and associated instruments.
15. Fully disclose to Transformation, before the visit, any prior relationship with the school or individuals working within the school.